



City of Virginia Beach  
City Manager's Office  
Media & Communications Group  
2401 Courthouse Drive, Room 220  
Virginia Beach, VA 23456  
(757) 385-4679 (Office)  
(757) 385-5665 (Fax), 385-4305 (TDD)  
VBgov.com

## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**May 19, 2006**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**  
**Skip Scanlon (757) 518-2646**

### **Swimming Advisory Lifted for Atlantic Ocean Water Between 54<sup>th</sup> to 71<sup>st</sup> Streets**

The Virginia Beach Department of Public Health has lifted a swimming advisory that had been in place from 54<sup>th</sup> to 71<sup>st</sup> streets. Lab results for the most recent testing, conducted Thursday by the health department, showed that bacteria levels in the water meet the State Water Quality Standards.

Signs have been removed that previously alerted the public of the advisory. Environmental health officials sample recreational beach water on a weekly basis during the swimming season from May through September.

“On May 17, 2006 the Virginia Beach Department of Public Health issued a swimming advisory to protect public health following an abnormally high bacteria level reading. We believe that the level was the result of recent heavy rainfall,” said the health director, Venita Newby-Owens, M. D. “The sampling level has returned to an acceptable bacteria level and it is now safe for residents and visitors to enter this area of the ocean.”

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Recreational waters are monitored for bacteria using indicator organisms such as enterococci, the indicator of choice for estuarine and marine waters. Enterococci are a group of organisms used to determine the extent of fecal contamination of recreational waters. While they do not cause illness, scientific studies indicate that their presence is closely correlated to the presence of other disease-causing organisms. People swimming or wading in waters with bacteria levels higher than the standard have an increased risk of developing gastrointestinal illness and skin, eye and respiratory infections.

For additional information on beaches, contact the Virginia Beach Department of Public Health at (757) 518-2700.

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